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PROGRAM Nightline

STATION WJLA TV
ABC Network

DATE November 15, 1982 11:30 PM

CITY Washington, DC

SUBJECT The New Soviet Leadership

TED KOPPEL: Even as Leonid Brezhnev was being laid to rest today, world attention focused on his successor. Who is Yuri Andropov, the new leader of the Soviet Union, and what does the accession of a former KGB chief mean to the West?

We'll focus on those questions tonight as we talk with former CIA chief William Colby, with former Soviet U. N. diplomat Arkady Schevchenko, with Vladimir Posner, English language commentator for Radio Moscow -- we'll talk to him, via satellite, from Moscow -- and with Andre Marton (?), former API correspondent who remembers Andropov as Soviet Ambassador to Budapest at the time of the Hungarian Revolution.

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KOPPEL: Good evening.

It is as though J. Edgar Hoover at the height of his influence as Director of the FBI had suddenly become President of the United States. And even that analogy is inadequate, because the KGB has no real equivalent here in the United States. It is the FBI and the CIA, and perhaps also the collective state and municipal police forces of the entire country, so pervasive is its presence and power. And the man who has just ascended to the Kremlin's most powerful post, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, Yuri Andropov, was until six months ago the head of the KGB. A recent profile in the New York Times takes note of Andropov's fondness for Scotch whiskey and tennis, Western novels and music. He is said to speak near fluent English. In short, he is far more urbane than Brezhnev or Khrushchev or Stalin.